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## THE AFRICAN PROBLEM.

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AN article of mine, published in 1883, entitled "The African in the United States," has been the object of so much adverse criticism, that I have felt called upon to reëxamine the argument carefully. The result, strengthening former conclusions, is given in the following pages. The argument is as follows: If the negro, while slowly advancing in education and wealth, is rapidly gaining in population upon the whites; and if he is, and must continue to be, an alien and distinct race, and, struggling to rise, must be pressed back by the ruling whites toward the labor-line; then disastrous social disorders are threatened, and colonization—enforced, if necessary—is the remedy.

Respecting the progress of races two views prevail. According to one, enlightened nations were once savages, who, gradually, and by a combination of lifting influences, partly internal and partly external, have reached their present status. According to the other, savage tribes are the swamps and bogs along life's river, whose flow has been noble from the start, illustrated, at different points in its course, by the Mosaic writings, Greek art and poetry, Roman law, and modern civilization. We give the negro the benefit of the former view, and hold that, as Asia was once in the ascendant, as Europe is now, so the day for Africa is to dawn. The negro, intellectually, is fairly advancing, at least in the rudiments. His educational percentage for the past decade shows better than that of the whites. In the seven States where the negroes are massed, and where causes abnormally affecting population, white and black, have been least operative (the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas), the decrease of illiteracy, as shown by being unable to write, was two per cent. for the whites, and seven per cent. for the blacks. The high figure for the latter is largely due to temporary stimulants and will not be maintained. The causes of the difference are: First, the novelty of

the educational privilege, which it is altogether unlikely the blacks will continue to make use of with the same ardor; second, that in 1870 illiteracy and school material among the blacks (eighty-three per cent.) were far greater than among the whites (twenty-seven per cent.); third, that the element among the blacks — the mulatto — that has been receiving education most freely, is declining, both in numbers and in character.

That the most intelligent of the colored population are the distinct mulattoes is everywhere noticeable. I mark it at their higher seats of learning. The representative men are mulattoes. In Washington the prominent colored office-holders are almost exclusively of this class. I can recall but one exception, the Congressman from South Carolina; and generally he would be regarded as a mulatto, with strong recession toward the pure African type. And in the minor offices the genuine black hue is the rare exception. Educational superiority for the mulatto is indisputable; and his large percentage of Caucasian blood would make it presumable. This element is diminishing; that is, it is losing its white blood and receding toward the negro type. For the decade ending with 1800, the excessive increase (eighty-two per cent.) of the free blacks, almost exclusively mulattoes, is readily accounted for. Compared with the whites and the slaves they were then a very small body, and grew with abnormal rapidity from the parentage of sensual white men and negresses. Subsequently, the rate of increase steadily declined, until for the several decades prior to emancipation it was about half that of the slaves. The illicit commingling of white and black blood is now practically over, and the mulatto gain from this source is cut off. Doubtless, there has been gain under the new régime, from the more frequent marital relations between mulattoes and blacks, but not enough to compensate for this loss; and it is clear that the mulatto is becoming absorbed in the pure African type. The result is said to be a mongrel race, inferior to the native negro. Whether mental capacity is dependent upon the size of the brain, or its quality, is a question. Certain scientists, assuming size as the criterion, and testing the brains of a large number of half-breeds in various stages of amalgamation, have reached the conclusion that three-fourths white blood gives mental capacity little below that of the Caucasian; half white, a capacity above that of the pure negro; while a quarter or an eighth white marks a breed decidedly

below the negro. Since the stream of original white blood has been, through emancipation, almost entirely cut off, and will remain so, mulattoes and blacks are left to mingle in marital relation, with a deteriorating tendency. The better class of mulattoes, marrying generally within their own circles, will be able to maintain, for some period, the preponderance of white blood. But from the white increment, divided and subdivided, must be evolved in the end an inferior race.

In the accumulation of property it would be instructive to know what progress the blacks are making, absolutely and relatively. To get statistics is almost impossible, the census not giving the wealth, individually or collectively, according to races. It is certain that progress is being made, but it is small compared with the remarkable progress that the South, as a whole, exhibits. The political supremacy of the whites, and the general material prosperity of those of the middle class who at the close of the war became possessed of the dismembered estates of the bankrupt planters, have been instrumental in rousing throughout the South a vigorous life, and giving to her industrial interests a lift that, in the retrospect, is amazing. In the general advancement, the colored man has undoubtedly gone forward; it is matter of regret that the census does not show to what degree. It will not be doubted that this progress has been very largely made by the better class of mulattoes. Observation and inquiry all tend to show this, as they also show that the genuine blacks, still improvident, have not done much, generally, to improve their worldly condition. With a large percentage now, as just after emancipation, it is a hand-to-mouth existence.

I regret being unable to speak for the colored man a better word in the way of moral advancement. As a slave he was an enthusiast for religion. It was a symbol of freedom, and held out to him the hope of sitting above kings, in a higher sphere. Unfortunately, it took on, too generally, a sensuous form, and negroes at the South sought their excited religious meetings for the ecstasies and bodily pleasure they afforded. Emancipation, education, increased worldly comfort, have enlarged both their sphere of endeavor and the degree and variety of enjoyment, and I fear religion does not possess the same attraction and influence as of yore. Never, until within the past year or two, have I heard negroes proclaim on the streets ultra and defiant infidelity. Senator Morgan, of Alabama, who, with every opportunity and advan-

tage, has examined the question closely, thinks it doubtful whether negro morals have at all improved since emancipation. It cannot be denied that an immense preponderance of the brutal crimes reported from the South are charged against negroes, and penitentiary reports sustain the charge. Though I do not believe that mere intellectual development is a panacea for evil, yet I am aware that ignorance and crime are associated, and that negro illiteracy being so far in excess, an excess of crime is to be expected in his direction. But I fear that the decrease of illiteracy bears no proper ratio to that of crime. Such is the verdict of criminal records, so far as I have been able to examine them. In South Carolina, for the past few years, the exhibit is an annual decrease of something under one per cent. for colored illiteracy, while the annual increase of crime, as shown by penitentiary reports, is eight per cent., the population swelling at the rate of three and a half per cent. The indications are that such is the general status throughout the South.

In discussing the African advancement in population, the substantial accuracy of the census of 1870 is assumed. I am aware that in certain portions of South Carolina it has been shown to be materially at fault; but there appears to be no ground for suspecting its general correctness. The superior credit attaching to the census of 1880 is due to its having been made under the direction of supervisors appointed to the work exclusively and for their special fitness; whereas that of 1870 was superintended by the district marshals, who divided their time between it and their regular duties. For the former, therefore, there is presumptively greater accuracy; but the latter is not considered so far inaccurate as to be incapable of giving approximately true results. The inaccuracies, whatever they may be, bear equally upon the two races, whose relative positions would not be affected, even were the errors much more material.

A thoughtful writer on this subject has recently appeared in Congressman Tucker, of Virginia, and as his conclusions are adverse to my own, I beg leave to point out the errors. He says: "While the whites were eighty and seven-tenths per cent. of the population in 1790, they were eighty-one and one-half per cent. in 1860. Including immigrants, the white population gained and the colored lost six per cent. in the whole period from 1790 to 1880, while in the last twenty years the whites have gained one per cent." The errors are in the periods

compared, and in not allowing fully for the foreign element. From 1790 to 1860 a gradual decline appears in the African rate of increase; and, comparing the two entire populations, and allowing for the foreign element, there was probably a gain for the whites of about two per cent. From 1860 to 1880, the same allowance being made, the two races advanced with but a shade of difference. My figures make the whites, in 1860, eighty-two and one-sixth per cent. of population; in 1880, eighty-two and one-fifth per cent. But manifestly the true comparison is between 1870 and 1880. Why Mr. Tucker should have chosen 1860 and 1880 as the testing dates, I am unable to see. The period from 1860 to 1870 was radically transitional for the negro, and peculiarly adverse to his increase. The year 1870 found him first fairly adjusted to the new conditions arising from emancipation, and evidently his relative rate of increase for the ensuing decade is the crucial one.

To reach this, the foreign element should be eliminated. The immense immigration that for years has been swelling the white ranks must, before a great while, begin to diminish, and ultimately cease. The rapid filling up of our own lands, and the inviting opportunities that are open to European settlers in other portions of the world are the assurances. The negro has had no accessions from abroad. The time is not distant when he will compete with the whites unaffected by immigration. The point therefore is, to determine his rate of increase compared with that of the native whites. The census reports distinguish between the foreign-born and those of foreign parentage, the latter being the true foreign element.

|                                                       |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1870. Foreign-born .....                              | 5,567,229  |
| 1870. Foreign parentage (one or both parents foreign) | 10,892,015 |
| 1870. Foreign parentage (both parents foreign) .....  | 9,734,845  |
| 1880. Foreign-born .....                              | 6,679,943  |
| 1880. Foreign parentage (one or both parents foreign) | 15,021,744 |
| 1880. Foreign parentage (both parents foreign) .....  | 13,011,646 |

Rating the foreign element as those both of whose parents were foreigners (and the figures should really be higher), we find that in 1870 the native whites were eighty-three per cent. of the population; in 1880, eighty-two per cent. Contrasting populations in the seven Southern States already mentioned, we find that in 1870 the whites were fifty-four per cent. of the population, and

in 1880, fifty-two per cent.,—a black gain, in excess of the white, of two per cent. of the whole population. Because of the difficulty of obtaining exact figures, no allowance is made here for immigration, the larger part of which came in after the completion of the census of 1870, and the actual black gain is something more. I see no cause for materially modifying my former conclusions, that the negro rate of increase for the past decade is thirty-five per cent. (more or less), or three and a half per cent. per annum, while that for the native whites is twenty per cent. ; and there appears to be no reason for doubting that these relative rates will be maintained. The negro rate is not at all incredible ; it has been surpassed in former decades ; from 1800 to 1810 it was thirty-seven per cent.

It should be noted that Southern whites are far more prolific than Northern. In the States above named the rate is twenty-nine per cent. for the past decade. An allowance must be made for immigration, which, though small (one to ten) compared with the great stream entering the North, has an appreciable effect upon population. Much the larger portion went South in the latter half of the last decade, and diminishes the native rate of increase (probably) to twenty-five per cent. Connecticut, without her foreign element, shows a rate of less than twelve per cent., and careful statistics put the Northern rate at fifteen per cent., and the Southern at twenty-five per cent. The difference is doubtless due to the superior wealth and culture of the former section.

The high rate for the negro, as shown by census returns, is sustained by further considerations. For the laboring and uneducated class a superior fertility is presumable. A laboring woman is strong to bear safely robust children ; but with the delicacy generally attendant upon wealth, a reverse tendency prevails. In the contracted circle of enjoyments open to the poor and ignorant, sexual pleasures become prominent. In the higher sphere and wider range of the cultivated and refined, such pleasures decline. High living generates a fullness of habit unfavorable to conception. From the desire of the possessor to retain his wealth, competence creates a tendency against marriage and toward continence in marriage, and checks population. Poverty and frugal fare produce opposite effects. The result of all these causes is, to make Northern whites less prolific than Southern, and Southern whites less prolific than the negro.

To this is to be added, that the negro finds at the South a climate as favorable to himself as it is, in its most fertile portions, unfavorable to whites; and that his history bears witness to a race with phenomenal breeding qualities. Personal inquiries in a Maryland village (not the most congenial climate for the negro) showed, in one instance, thirty-five living children in four negro families; in another instance, twenty-one children in three families. These families were not selected, but taken at random, with no anticipation of the result, apart from the swarms of children generally observed about negro homes. And I have seen a statement that in three colored families in Georgia thirty children were recently counted.

To sum up: In the acquisition of wealth and education, the negro, on the whole, gives promise of moderate advancement. In morals, he appears to be not far from stationary. In respect to population, he shows a marked increase, his rate being double that of the Northern whites, and upward of one-third greater than that of the Southern. It is matter for most serious regret that the bill before the late session of Congress, "to provide for the creation of a commission to inquire into and report upon the intellectual, material, and industrial progress of the colored race in the United States, since 1865," failed for lack of time to give it consideration. A measure bearing more directly and critically upon the interests of the whole country, could not have been devised. The data now at command, in some directions full enough, warrant the substantial accuracy of these conclusions. The statement in a former article, that eighty years hence the Southern blacks would nearly double the Southern whites (96,000,000 for the former, 60,000,000 for the latter), was meant to mark a tendency. The present rates of increase for the two races, which, unchecked, would give such figures, are liable to be, and undoubtedly will be, cut down by a variety of causes. A general one is, that, as population grows in density, its percentage of gain declines. But it is morally certain that by that date, and perhaps sooner, the negroes throughout the South will have a great numerical superiority, with a disproportionate gain in wealth and education, and a gain lower still in the domain of morals.

When I say that the negroes are, and will continue to be, an alien people, I mean that they will socially stand apart, and develop under the influence of environments peculiar to the

race; that they will not be merged in the general body, tending toward a homogeneous whole. The thorough social intermingling of the two races on terms of unconsciously-recognized equality, the freedom of marriage across the color line, and the general fusion of bloods, is the contradictory and impossible idea. Emancipation, citizenship, the ballot, full political rights, have always been possibilities for the blacks; but social fusion, never. If it be said that the whites have been the persistent miscegenationists, and that the million of *ante bellum* half-breeds with white fatherhood is the proof, the answer is, that in the gross passions of white men running wanton among slaves, can be traced no logical tendency toward social equality. It has been asserted that the negroes themselves are not over-zealous for such equality, and look with disfavor upon unions across the line. If this be true, it strengthens my position; but, probably, the grapes are sour. A recognized, genuine equality is the vain goal of African ambition,—vain, because white repugnance is invincible. A race distinct in color and feature, yesterday in a condition of slavery, now free and advancing, yet immensely behind, and with all the memories of their race and of their former estate still fresh against them, cannot hope for union with the children or children's children of their masters. Those on the ground feel it stronger than words can express it. Socially the two races are getting farther apart; and the State laws that have been enacted, making mixed marriages penal, are the expression of a profound sentiment that the best interests of each race forbid them. The social status at Washington City is illustrative. No point offers such a showing for the colored man. It is the center of his intelligence. In the District of Columbia, for 1880, his illiteracy (as shown by being unable to write) was thirty-two per cent., the race average being sixty-three per cent. In Washington are to be found the foremost and representative colored men—Frederick Douglass, a powerful orator, with a fame co-extensive with the country; ex-Senator Bruce, now Register of the Treasury, a cultivated and courteous gentleman; and the colored congressmen. There, too, has been dominant, for the past quarter of a century, the political party with which the blacks affiliate, and which assumes to be the special patron of the race. Yet I find, after several months' sojourn in Washington, the social lines as strictly drawn and fusion as thoroughly scouted there as anywhere in the South.

If this repugnance were founded on a mere prejudice, time might remove it, but not before the development of the apprehended evils. Against less weighty obstacles the coalescence of Saxon and Norman required a century. Before the end of such a period, negro fertility and race integrity will have wrought their results. But fusion is forbidden by natural laws, and white repugnance has a scientific and permanent basis. The human family is marked off by color into three grand divisions—white, yellow, and black. It is altogether probable that fusion between varieties of the same color is beneficial, but that fusion across the color line is lowering. The blending of different white bloods makes, in every way, a stronger race; but every instance of blending between white and black has proven adverse, creating, in the end, a half-breed race below the pure African ancestry.

If these premises are true, the final result must be race antagonism, growing in intensity, and menacing malignant evils. One race must be above, the other below, with a struggle for position; equality is impossible. The blacks, though equal before the law, are now, in every way, save a superb physique, the inferior race, and are practically so treated by the whites. The women are at the wash-tubs, the men in the fields, or filling menial stations. Through a race instinct the whites hold them in this lower sphere, and purpose keeping them there. The blacks reasonably submit; partly because the submissiveness of slavery lingers, partly because they recognize the inequality of any contest. But while the race, as a whole, is slowly advancing, a considerable wing has made a pronounced advance, and reached a position in respect to intelligence and wealth where social ostracism and general race disabilities begin seriously to challenge remonstrance; and the twenty years from emancipation will scarcely be doubled before the remonstrance will come strong and threatening, however unavailing, from the entire race. The two races are obeying irresistible propulsions, which raise the danger signal, because they are irreconcilable. The blacks are the victims of an inexorable caste; to stand in the social order beyond a certain level, will not be allowed. Every higher step of progress, every deepening of aspiration, will carry with it increased humiliation. In all quarters the blacks will be checked by the aroused antagonism and competition of the better-trained race. The whites will refuse to negroes business association, as

they now refuse the marriage-tie, the parlor, and the school-house. Should black business competition become obtrusive, white interests would combine to defeat it. In politics one observes identical tendencies; the negro is the underling. The political organization with which the blacks now naturally affiliate is restrained, by fear of Caucasian sentiment, from giving this element the prominence it numerically deserves. In several States nine-tenths of the voters are blacks. The policy, necessarily, is to humor them with such temporary and subordinate positions as may serve to keep them in line. Were the negro allowed the permanent and commanding station commensurate with his voting strength, the party could not stand before the American people.

This inability to rise unobstructedly contravenes a great underlying social law, whereby, in a free State, the lower, laboring class tends upward, and the higher class downward, until, at the end of the cycle, positions are reversed. At no distant day the negro race in the South will have a preponderance of population counted by millions; and the repression of their advancing tendencies, growing more and more intense, and struggling for recognition, portends social convulsions. Let society be so ordered as to give merit the freest play, finding its reward without hindrance, and the poorest may not murmur, if he cannot leave the dirt and din and toil and heat and feverish air of daily life, to rest and recover at sea-side or on mountain-top. He may cheerfully toil on and hoard, in the dim yet inspiring hope that his children, at least, with better start, may win higher levels and go with the best. Deny such aspirations and you make him a revolutionist.

Another result will be the political consolidation of the blacks, for the blacks. Every circumstance of their situation tends to develop a powerful *esprit de corps*; and the day is near, unless timely remedies interpose, when an African party, pure and simple, the outcome of African exclusion and repression, will spring up throughout the South and dominate it. From the Carolinas to Louisiana the two populations are now not far from a balance; and as they are massed in opposite parties, the great odds for the whites in intelligence, wealth, and training, have made them, in political contests, signally successful, without necessary resort to illegal means. But within a generation or two mere numbers

must triumph over every counter consideration, and make the negro politically supreme. There is no room for doubt that this power will be used to Africanize the South. To suppose the contrary would be to suppose a revolution in human nature. A distinct race, for generations held off and underneath, rising to political power, will wield it through and for the race. The results would be disastrous. The present prosperity of the Southern States is due to the white man's rule, efficient local control being secured to those counties that are overwhelmingly African through the legislative appointment of leading county officers. That affairs are so is better both for the South and for the whole country. To assert the contrary is the verbiage of politicians, a monstrous lie, that no American believes. From the Carolinas southward, the negroes will be able to grasp political power long before they will be competent to guide our intellectual and nicely adjusted civilization. The sequence would be swiftly and thoroughly fatal. Who does not know that upon that particular section would fall a universal, permanent, and deadly blight; and that the presence of a decaying member would vitally involve the interests of the country at large? The partial, bolstered black rule of Reconstruction days at the South, with its corruptions, thieveries, caricatures of government, material stagnation, and miseries, which vanished before white intelligence upon the removal of disfranchisement, is an inkling of what will be when the blacks, advanced enough for the aspiration, but not the inspiration, of governing, shall have become political masters through their own strength, and in the teeth of antagonisms that shall have aroused race pride into vindictive moods. They will rise to power to stay, and make the land an African waste.\* The beginning of such a state of affairs would inevitably be marked by race conflicts. The answer of a witness in the Danville riot investigation is representative:

\* The course of politics in Washington City and the District of Columbia illustrates the tendency. By Congressional enactment the population, white and black, has been disfranchised. The negro vote, though not the majority, had already made politics so corrupt, so degrading, and so fraught with evil to the municipal government, that, to get rid of it, it was thought better to disfranchise the entire body of the people. This, accordingly, has been done, at the center of African intelligence, and by a Congress that stands forth as a special friend of the colored race.

“When white men put money in a town and seek to build it up, they will not let negroes rule. You may put that down as a sure thing.” Three courses would be open to the whites: To submit, to emigrate, or to remain and struggle. The last alternative would, doubtless, be the first resolve, and the races would meet in wasting collisions, until swelling numbers having confirmed black authority, the whites would gradually seek other homes.

Such is the negro problem, the most momentous before the American people, a problem that thoughtful men are dwelling upon, especially throughout the South, with growing anxiety. Some have sought the solution in the dispersion of the blacks over the States, and their gradual fading away, as the weaker race, in the mass of the white population. But they will concentrate, more and more, in a half-dozen States south and southwest, and multiply with phenomenal rapidity. Others have looked for the blending of the two races. Were this to prevail, the result, it is scientifically certain, would be race deterioration. Colonization would be effectual, and necessity will probably realize it over difficulties that now seem insurmountable.

There is a land before the black man, and a motive for his removal thither. The undeveloped African continent has splendid possibilities; the free States of the Congo and other sections will offer him inviting homes. His native land, as the sluggishness born of slavery gives place to rising ambitions and race longings, will it not gain a new interest in his eyes? It would be unworthy of his better manhood to think otherwise. He will, too, be stimulated toward it by the checks and mortifications that his progress and growing self-assertion are doomed to experience here. If he is worthy of freedom and capable of supporting a hopeful citizenship, every impulse of personal pride, every intelligent aspiration, every patriotic feeling, should urge him toward the land of his fathers, where his utmost possibilities would have the fullest and freest opportunity for development.

Should the blacks not choose colonization, let the whites of the whole country demand it. We have been assuming that Southern whites and blacks are the only parties interested; but there is another party, and a powerful one—the Northern whites. Among these has widely prevailed a deep sympathy for the negro, both as a slave and as a freedman believed to be oppressed.

Founded upon a state of Southern affairs largely imaginative, the sentiment was natural, and grew from man's compassionate and justice-loving side. But the whites have race instincts, and when the Africanizing and ruin of the South becomes a clearly seen danger, they will be a unit, the country over, for the remedy. There will be divisions at first, no doubt, and discussions, and party movements; but the influences for union will prove resistless. Material interests, pride of country, race affinity, will force the combination, and demand the separation of the races. Mark how popular sentiment is gathering against the Chinese. The yellow patch on our Western coast is beginning to excite apprehension. On opposite shores of the Pacific, cheap and rapid steamship lines have recently joined two lands, the one with an excessive and redundant population, where wages are at the minimum, the other largely unoccupied, with wages at the maximum. Naturally the yellow tide began to flow in, and, with habits of economy and industry born of an over-dense population, to supplant American labor and interests. Congress has properly interposed repressive measures, and the platforms of the two parties vie with each other in supporting them. Why? Because these yellow people are an alien and distinct race, that will not mingle with the whites, and threaten, through numbers, to Mongolianize the Pacific slope. This is a white man's country, and a white man's government; and the white race will never allow a section of it to be Africanized. When colonization is accepted as the remedy, the whites will stand together to stimulate and assist it, or, should it prove necessary, to force it. If the right be questioned, we reply that, in extraordinary emergencies, states have never found difficulty in reaching popular and vital ends, however laws may read or constitutions be construed.

The whites, and not least the Southern whites, have good wishes for the negro. He has been a necessary and efficient laborer, and has added immensely to the country's wealth. It is not forgotten that during the war he made no attempt to rise against his master. Since the war, he has, upon the whole, creditably filled a difficult position; and the material and educational advance that marks his twenty years of freedom is ground for a hopeful future, under fitting conditions. The evils of his stay here are not individual, but inherent in the race, and unavoidable; and they lie in the future, when, under our forms of govern-

ment, over wide sections, and in the presence of the race that has created it, he will rise to the political control of a highly intellectual civilization, with which he has not been identified, and for whose guidance his training will have been insufficient. The results would be disastrous to both races, and for their common good let them be separated, and the African turn, or be turned, to Africa.

E. W. GILLIAM.